

Remarks

Claims 1, 6, 10 and 16 have been amended, claims 5 and 11-15 have been canceled and new claims 17-27 have been added. Review and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

By way of background, it is noted that in order to assemble the feed grip of the present invention, the gripping plate 40, feed arm 44, washer 46 and handle 42 are arranged in their orientation shown in Fig. 5. The attachment portion 50 of the feed arm 40 is then passed through the coupling portion 61 of the feed arm 44 and the washer 46, and received in the opening 70 of the handle 42. As shown in Fig. 6, the legs 60, 62 of the gripping plate 40 engage the tapered inner wall 72 of the handle 42, which urges the legs 60, 62 toward each other. When the attachment portion 50 of the gripping plate 40 is inserted into a sufficient depth in the opening 70 of the handle 42 and the tips 64, 66 are aligned with an associated end opening 74, 76, each tip 64, 66 is received in one of the end openings 74, 76 of the handle 42 (see Fig. 8). If the tips 64, 66 are not aligned with the end openings 74, 76, it may be required to rotate the handle 42 to seat the tips 64, 66 in the end openings 74, 76.

In order to disengage the handle 42, the handle 42 is rotated about its central axis while the gripping plate 40 is held stationary. The relative rotation urges the legs 60, 62 with tips 64, 66 inwardly and toward each other, thereby disengaging the tips 64, 66 from the associated end opening 74, 76. The handle 42 is locked in place only when the tips 64, 66 are radially aligned with the end openings 74, 76, and the handle 42 can be disengaged by twisting the handle 42 such that the tips 64, 66 are not radially aligned with the end openings 74, 76. In particular, each end opening 74, 76 includes a cam surface located therein (as can be seen in Fig. 6). Rotation of the handle 42 causes each cam surface to engage the curved tips 64, 66 and move the tips 64, 66 inwardly to thereby disengage the handle 42 and feed grip 40.

Fig. 7 has been amended to correctly identify the tips with reference numbers 64, 66, and to correctly identify the legs with reference numbers 60, 62. Fig. 8 has been amended to make similar corrections and to more clearly identify the end openings 74, 76.

Independent claims 1 and 16 have been amended to specify that the handle can be manually decoupled from the attachment portion by twisting the handle relative to the attachment portion. In contrast, none of the cited references disclose this feature.

At the top of page 3 of the Advisory Action mailed on November 24, 2004 it is suggested that the twisting of the Baker reference (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0142073) could facilitate removal of the handle of that device. However, this position is respectfully traversed. In particular, the Baker reference is directed to a paintbrush assembly which is generally rectangular in cross section (as specified in paragraph 78 of the Baker publication). Thus it is clear that the rectangular handle 52 of the Baker reference cannot be twisted relative to the rectangular ferrule 50 which receives the handle 52 therein (Fig. 13). In addition, even if such a twisting motion were to be possible, it is not shown or suggested that such a twisting motion could decouple the handle from the ferrule. In fact, such a twisting motion would appear to simply drive the latches 56, 56' deeper into the space behind the protrusions 68, 68'.

Independent claims 1 and 16 have also been amended to add the limitation of the feed grip openings instead of the claimed annuli on the basis that the claimed feed grip openings more clearly describe that feature of the claimed invention.

New claim 17 depends from claim 1 and specifies that the handle has a generally continuous outer surface and lacks any auxiliary openings that communicate with the central opening. Support for this limitation can be found in the drawings of the originally-filed application (Figs. 3-5 and Fig. 8 illustrating the handle without any openings). Claim 16 already specifies that the handle has a closed axial end with a continuous outer surface such that the closed axial end lacks any auxiliary openings that communicate with the central opening. As previously outlined a smooth outer surface of the handle, which lacks any openings, allows for ease of cleaning and provides for more sanitary conditions. New claim 20 depends from claim 16 and includes similar limitations.

New claim 18 depends from claim 1 and specifies that the handle is generally tube-shaped. Thus claim 18 includes a limitation similar to one already present in claim 16. This feature further distinguishes the present invention over the cited references.

New claim 19 depends from claim 1 and specifies that the handle includes a pair of cam surfaces, each cam surface being located in the handle opening. Claim 19 also specifies that each cam surface is located and configured to interact with one of the feet to urge an associated foot inwardly when the handle is twisted relative to the attachment portion. Support for this amendment can be found in the last paragraph of page 5 of the original application, wherein it is

disclosed that when the handle 42 is twisted relative to the gripping plate 40, the tips 64, 66 are dislodged from the end openings 74, 76. It is also disclosed that the curved tips 64, 66 of the legs 60, 62 enable the legs 60, 62 to be dislodged from the end openings 74, 76. It is submitted that, upon a reading of the specification, one of ordinary skill in the art would immediately understand and appreciate that the handle 42 must include cam surfaces in the end openings 74, 76 in order to urge the tips curved 64, 66 inwardly upon the twisting motion. In addition, the cam surfaces are clearly shown in Fig. 6 of the original application. Accordingly it is submitted that claim 19 does not include any new matter, and further distinguishes over the cited references. New claim 21 depends from claim 16 and includes similar limitations.

New claim 22 depends from claim 16 and specifies that the handle can be manually decoupled, without the use of tools, from the attachment portion by the twisting of the handle relative to the attachment portion such that the attachment portion and the handle are not generally rigidly coupled. Thus claim 22 adds a limitation similar to that found in claim 1.

New independent claim 23 specifies the twisting motion between the handle and the gripping plate. New claims 24-27 depend from claim 23 and add further distinctions.

This Amendment accompanies a Request for Continued Examination. Prompt and favorable examination is requested.

The applicant(s) hereby authorizes the Commissioner under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a)(3) to treat any paper that is filed in this application which requires an extension of time as incorporating a request for such an extension. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required by this paper, or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 20-0809.

Respectfully submitted,



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IN THE DRAWINGS:

Replace original Fig. 7 with replacement Fig. 7.

Replace original Fig. 8 with replacement Fig. 8.